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Covert Action by CIA Overused, Ex-Official Writes in Book

By E. W. KENWORTHY
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 WASHINGTON — Roger

Hilsman, a State Department official in the Kennedy administration, writes in a forthcoming book that covert action by the Central Intelligence Agency has been "overused as an instrument of foreign policy."

Hilsman, who is now a professor in the School of International Studies at Columbia University, was director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research from February, 1961, until May, 1963, and then as-

sistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs until March, 1964.

IN A BOOK SOON to be published, entitled "To Move a Nation," published by Doubleday & Co., Hilsman writes that he agrees with Allen Dulles, former CIA director, that national security requires and justifies covert operations by the CIA.

By covert operations, Hilsman includes both clandestine intelligence - gathering activities, whether by conventional espionage or photographic reconnaissance by U2 planes, and political activities, such

as financing an anti-Communist labor union abroad or even overthrowing a Communist or pro-Communist regime.

The trouble, Hilsman says, is that too often there has been resort to covert operations without considering whether they were effective and appropriate in a particular situation and whether there was not a more effective and appropriate alternative available.

Thus, he writes, it was one thing to investigate and carry through a coup in Iran against Premier Mossadegh and his Communist allies, but quite

another to launch a 1,000-man invasion of Cuba when there was no effective internal opposition to Premier Castro.

AGAIN, HE SAYS, it was one thing for the CIA to "give a covert boost" to Magsaysay in the Philippines, who was "a natural leader with a wide popular support" in his fight against the Communist Huk-balahaps, and quite a different thing to try by covert means to "create a Magsaysay," as the CIA tried to do with the unpopular and ineffective Gen. Phoumi Nosavan in Laos.

By the end of the Eisenhow-

er administration, Hilsman writes, covert political action had become "a fad," until U.S. agents abroad were as "ubiquitously busy" as Communist agents.

The upshot was, he says, that while one covert action uncovered might be "plausibly deniable," several hundred were not, and the cumulative effect was to tarnish the American image.

"Too heavy reliance on the techniques of secret intelligence," Hilsman writes, "so corroded one of our major political assets, the belief in American intentions and integrity, as to nullify much of the gain."

Hilsman does not put the blame for this situation on the CIA so much as he does on the President, the secretary of state and the secretary of defense, who were fundamentally responsible for making covert action a fad.

The basic trouble with the CIA, both under the Eisenhower administration and to a somewhat lesser degree under President Kennedy, Hilsman believes, was "that the agency was simply too powerful for the narrow function for which it was responsible."